

22 JUL 1965

Sanitized - Approved For Release - CIA-

FOIAb3b

Crucial Talks on Viet Nam Continuing at White House

By GARNETT D. HORNER

Star Staff Writer

President Johnson and his top advisers continued today what appears to be an exceptionally thorough and crucial review of the problems faced by the United States in South Viet Nam.

The President met today with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff after two long sessions yesterday with a broader group of diplomatic and intelligence advisers as well as military officials.

And he arranged another session this afternoon with a broader group, including the Army, Navy and Air Force secretaries and civilian consultants on foreign intelligence and foreign affairs.

White House Press Secretary Bill D. Moyers described the conferences yesterday and today as part of a series of meetings planned by the President during the next few days to review a report by McNamara on his findings during a week in South Viet Nam "and discuss in great detail all aspects of the problems we face in Viet Nam."

Intelligence is Topic

Out of the series of meetings are expected to come the "new and serious decisions," probably involving a big buildup of American forces in South Viet Nam and callup of some reserves, which the President indicated in a July 13 press conference might be necessary.

But Moyers said the questions of troop deployment and reserves were not discussed during the first meetings yesterday.

Moyers had no information about whether proposals for sending more troops to Viet Nam and calling up reserves were under discussion today, as would be indicated by inclusion of the Joint Chiefs and service secretaries in the conferences.

He did say the session with the Joint Chiefs involved a review of McNamara's report on his mission to Viet Nam and recommendations that "are being deliberated elsewhere in the government."

No Discussion of Message

Moyers said he was sure that staff work "is going on" on McNamara's report.

In response to questions, Moyers said he had heard no discussion of any possible message to Congress or television address to the Nation by the President on Viet Nam. But he said that if decisions are made that necessitate "any kind of presidential utterance, you will be notified very shortly."

Those called to the White House for continued discussion of Viet Nam problems this afternoon included Clark Clifford, Washington lawyer and chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and two members of the President's panel of consultations on foreign affairs—John McCloy, New York banker, and Arthur Dean, New York lawyer, both of whom have held important government jobs in the foreign policy field.

Asked why they were taking part in the review of Viet Nam policy, Moyers said "the President is interested in bringing in to these discussions as wide a range of viewpoints and experience as possible."

Others participating in the afternoon session included McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Undersecretary of State George Ball, Gen. Earle B. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor, Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze, retiring Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuckert, Harold Brown, recently nominated to succeed Zuckert, McGeorge Bundy, the President's special assistant for national security affairs and other members of the White House staff.

Henry Cabot Lodge, ambassador-designate to South Viet Nam, who took part in yesterday's session, was out of town today, Moyers said.

Asked how the President assesses the current situation in Viet Nam, Moyers said "I think it is obvious to everyone ever since he came into office the President has regarded as serious our situation in Viet Nam."

Moyers said the discussion yesterday included the operation of the American intelligence apparatus in that part of the world, the role of the U.S. Information Agency and economic assistance in the construction and pacification of the strife-torn country.

Secretary Rusk told a group of teen-age youths this morning that "we are in a crisis situation" for which he had no comforting answers.

In a brief talk to the 100 delegates to the Boys Nation assembly, Rusk said that all diplomatic approaches to the Communist side had failed. He said the President knows that whatever decisions he takes on Viet Nam will effect every home in the United States.

In Somber Mood

Rusk seemed in an unusually somber mood as he spoke to the group in the East Auditorium of the State Department. He said that it was vitally important to maintain the "integrity of America's commitment" to South Viet Nam, a commitment which he said was the "pillar of peace" in the world.

Referring to other crises in the post-war world, Rusk said, "Once again we'll have to see this matter through."

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield said last night it is "anticipated on our side" that the war may continue for 10 years — while the Communist side talks of 20.

Mansfield told the Senate "there is talk of a reserve call-up, extended enlistment, added defense appropriations and the like. It is even anticipated on our side that the war may go on for four or five or even ten years and Ho Chi Minh, president of North Viet Nam, has stated in the last day or so that he is prepared for a war of 20 years duration."

Mansfield called for an effort to reconvene the 1962 Geneva conference to discuss the affairs of Laos, Cambodia, South Viet Nam and North Viet Nam.

Moyers said he would characterize the White House sessions as involving a "thorough and penetrating review of many facets of the situation in South Viet Nam."

He agreed with a reporter who asked if he was trying to get across the idea that increasing American fighting manpower in South Viet Nam was not the only problem confronting this government.

But he refused to agree that it would be fair to describe the purpose of the meetings as a "review of McNamara's report and all aspects of the

problems facing the country in Viet Nam.

Moyers said he had no idea how long the review sessions would continue.

Movements Restricted

On his return yesterday, McNamara told reporters that he saw "deterioration" in South Viet Nam since his previous visit about a year ago, but that there were some encouraging changes, too.

The deterioration was dramatized when he and his party found that their personal movements were greatly restricted compared with their previous visit.

On this trip they could not move freely even in Saigon. They were given personal bodyguards, told to stay away from some public places, and moved through the streets in a heavily armed convoy.

Out in the countryside, they found that some areas where they had driven a year ago were closed now and had to be bypassed by air.

The McNamara group also was disappointed by the failure of the South Vietnamese forces to meet their schedule of expansion and improvement.

Government forces are trying to add 100,000 men in an effort to improve the ratio of friendly to enemy strength. But recruiting and training are much too slow.

There was also an obvious failure of government combat units to recover normally after losing men in a Viet Cong attack.

American troops are needed to shore up the government forces and improve the strength ratio even if there is no basic change in strategy. American mobility and firepower can compensate in part for the larger numbers needed.

While the government side stumbles, the enemy grows stronger. And it has military resources it hasn't even used yet.

The Viet Cong regular troops are expanding, mostly through the addition of North Vietnamese army units. Exact estimates of Viet Cong strength are impossible, but some officials who talked about 65,000 a month ago said another 100,000 parttime Viet Cong were being trained.

CPYRG
CPYRG

Sanitized - Approved For Release - CIA - RDP75-00129R000100840004-8